

## Message Text

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45

ACTION EA-10

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R 130825Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBSSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 184

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, MY

SUBJ: POLITICAL FERMENT IN SARAWAK

REF: A. KUALA LUMPUR 1326; B. KUALA LUMPUR 3234

1. SUMMARY: POLITICAL UNDERCURRENTS IN SARAWAK HAVE BEEN BROUGHT INTO OPEN BY STATE INFORMATION DEPARTMENT PUBLICATION SUGGESTING THAT OPPOSITION SARAWAK NATIONAL PARTY (SNAP) JOIN RULING NATIONAL FRONT (NF). THIS DEVELOPMENT COMPLEMENTS REPORTS THAT NF GOVERNMENT IS ATTEMPTING TO WOO SNAP LEADERS, AND ALSO RUMORS THAT SNAP AND NF PARTNER SARAWAK UNITED PEOPLE'S PARTY (SUPP) ARE NEGOTIATING TO FORM AN OPPOSITION GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. K.L. DAILY "NEW STRAITS TIMES" (NST) JUNE 12 CARRIED REPORT THAT SARAWAK'S NATIONAL FRONT (NF) GOVERNMENT HAS INVITED SNAP TO JOIN IT IN INTEREST OF POLITICAL AND RACIAL UNITY. QUOTING EDITORIAL FROM "SARAWAK GAZETTE," A STATE INFORMATION DEPARTMENT PUBLICATION, NST REPORT SAID SNAP IS FACED WITH TWO CHOICES: DISSOLVING ITSELF AND ENCOURAGING ITS MEMBERS TO JOIN NF, OR

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BRINGING ENTIRE PARTY INTO NF GOVERNMENT. "GAZETTE" EDITORIAL

CONTINUED THAT POLITICAL UNITY IS ESSENTIAL FOR SARAWAK TO PREVENT "ANTI-NATIONAL ELEMENTS" FROM EXPLOITING RACIAL DIFFERENCES AND IMBALANCES, TO PRESENT UNITED FRONT AGAINST COMMUNIST INSURGENTS, AND TO ELIMINATE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DIVISIONS. "GAZETTE" REPORTEDLY ASSERTED THAT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA TODAY, POLITICAL OPPOSITION HAS BECOME "LUXURY WE MUST TEMPORARILY SACRIFICE." EDITORIAL ALSO RECALLED SABAH EXPERIENCE WHERE DAKAZAN PARTY UPKO DISSOLVED ITSELF IN FAVOR OF PRESENT RULING UNITED SABAH NATIONAL ORGANIZATION (USNO). FINALLY, EDITORIAL SAID IT WOULD BE COMMENDABLE FOR SNAP TO JOIN NF WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS SO AS TO AVOID BICKERING AND THAT NF WOULD RESPOND TO SNAP "IN THE TRUE SPIRIT OF CONCILIATION.";

3. SINCE DETENTION OF SNAP LEADER JAMES WONG LAST OCTOBER (REF A AND RELATED REPORTS), THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS THAT CHIEF MINISTER DATUK RAHMAN YA'KUB AND NF HAVE ATTEMPTED TO ENTICE SNAP LEADERS TO JOIN THE GOVERNMENT. THESE REPORTS HAVE BEEN ROUTINELY DENIED BY SNAP OFFICIALS; AT TIME MOST RECENT PARLIAMENT SESSION IN LATE MARCH, PROMINENT SNAP LEADERS LEO MOGGIE AND EDMUND LANGGU TOLD EMB-OFF THEY WILL NEVER GIVE IN AND JOIN NF. AT SAME TIME, RECENT VISITORS TO SARAWAK HAVE BROUGHT BACK REPORTS THAT SNAP IS NEGOTIATING SECRETLY WITH NF PARTNER SUPP, THE CHINESE PARTY IN THE RULING COALITION, TO FORM A NEW OPPOSITION GOVERNMENT REPLACING RAHMAN YA'KUB AND HIS PESAKA-BUMIPUTRA PARTY. REPORTEDLY, SUPP IS UNHAPPY OVER THE AGGRANDIZEMENT OF PERSONAL POWER BY RAHMAN YA-KUB (A LA TUN MUSTAPHA IN SABAH) AND FAVORS MORE FORCEFUL POLITICAL ROLE FOR CHINESE.

SOME SUPP LEADERS ARE REPORTED TO BE READY TO JOIN IBAN-MAJORITY SNAP IN A NEW GOVERNMENT, EFFECTIVELY CUTTING OUT MAJOR MALAY POLITICAL INTERESTS.

4. COMMENT: THERE APPEAR TO BE GRAINS OF TRUTH IN ALL OF THESE REPORTS, NOTWITHSTANDING THE CONTRADICTION THAT SNAP MAY BE ENTERTAINING A BID TO JOIN THE NATIONAL FRONT WHILE AT THE SAME TIME SECRETLY NEGOTIATING WITH SUPP. ADDING TO THE GENERAL CONFUSION IS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S APPARENT NERVOUSNESS OVER ITS RELATIONS WITH THE BORNEO STATES OCCASIONED BY DIFFICULTIES WITH TUN MUSTAPHA IN WHICH RAHMAN YA'KUB HAS ALSO PLAYED A PART (REF B). IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT IRRESISTIBLE PRESSURES COULD BE PLACED ON SNAP EITHER TO DISSOLVE OR TO JOIN THE NATIONAL FRONT AS A PARTY AS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE "GAZETTE" EDITORIAL SUGGESTS. AS SEEN IN THE JAMES WONG AFFAIR, RAHMAN YA'KUB IS NOT LOATHE TO USE ALL THE POWERS AT HIS COMMAND TO ACHIEVE DESIRED POLITICAL ENDS. UNDERHILL

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